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(11) EP 0 717 545 A3

(12) EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(88) Date of publication A3:  
17.06.1998 Bulletin 1998/25

(51) Int Cl.<sup>6</sup>: H04M 3/56, H04Q 3/62,  
H04M 3/50

(43) Date of publication A2:  
19.06.1996 Bulletin 1996/25

(21) Application number: 95308699.8

(22) Date of filing: 01.12.1995

(84) Designated Contracting States:  
DE FR GB

(30) Priority: 13.12.1994 US 355382

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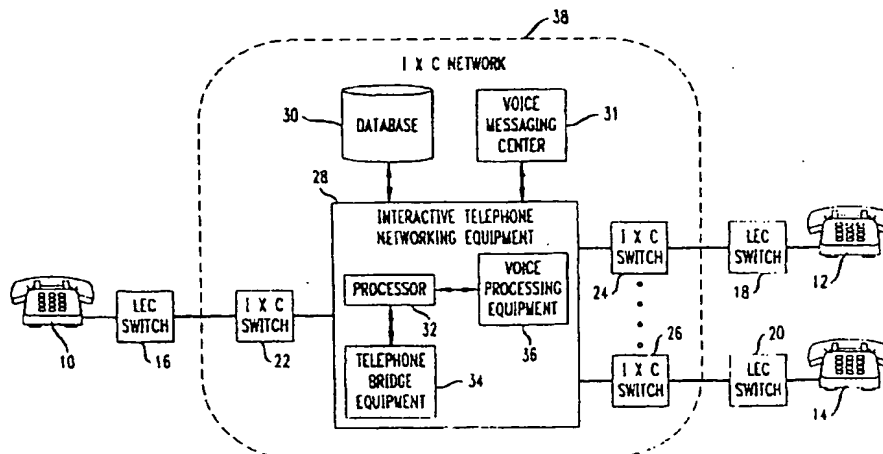
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(54) Interactive telephone networking service

(57) Methods and apparatus are disclosed for enabling parties with similar interests to speak with one another through connections automatically established by equipment within the telephone network. A party seeking to join a conversation or obtain information (referred to as a "requesting subscriber") is connected automatically with an appropriate individual, conference call, or voice messages on the basis of information provided by the requesting subscriber and information about other

prospective parties to the call (other "subscribers" to the interactive telephone network service). The requesting subscriber need not know the identities or telephone numbers of the other subscribers. The identities and telephone numbers of the other subscribers are maintained in a database and may be held in secrecy. Similarly, a requesting subscriber may create or retrieve telephone messages stored in a database according to the subject matter of the message.

FIG. 1





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# EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 95 30 8699

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X	WO 92 17021 A (TAKAHASHI WATARU) * figures 5-7 * * page 7, line 18 - page 12, line 6 *	1-8	H04M3/56 H04Q3/62 H04M3/50 H04M3/42
X	US 5 283 731 A (LALONDE JAMES E ET AL) * figures 1-3,5-8 * * column 3, line 42 - column 6, line 42 * * column 7, line 33 - column 10, line 64 *	9-11	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			H04M
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 29 April 1998	Examiner Weiss, P
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

EPO FORM 1503/03 B2 (P04C01)